[Carta a A.W. Clausen, President of the World Bank]

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British Campaign for the Defence of Political Prisoners and Human Rights in Indonesia

SPONSORS: Lord Avebury
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4 June, 1985

A.W. Clausen, President,
The World Bank, 1818 H Street, NW,
Washington DC 20433

Dear Mr Clausen,

According to a report in Berita Yudha (26 April, 1985) the new Family Planning Centre just opened in Dili, capital of East Timor, to promote birth control throughout the region has been financed almost entirely by the World Bank. The paper states that the building cost Rp. 648,080,000, of which Rp. 616,923,147 was provided by the World Bank, and the remainder by the Indonesian Government. We would be grateful to know whether this report is true.

This press report and another in Angkatan Bersenjata (29 April) make it clear that the birth control programme is meeting with a great deal of resistance among the East Timorese. Both reports speak of great intensification in the programme's implementation as a "decisive aspect of resolving the population problem in East Timor". The Indonesian-appointed governor Mario Viegas Carrascalao even claims that the programme has now been facilitated by a written statement said to have been issued by Mgr Carlos Filipe Belo, Apostolic Administrator of the Catholic Church in East Timor supporting the birth control programme. In view of the firmly-held position of the Catholic Church on birth control, you will probably agree that this claim is too preposterous to be taken seriously. At the same time it reveals the subterfuge employed by the Indonesian authorities to press ahead with birth control despite popular opposition.

I think you must be aware of the enormous loss of life inflicted on the East Timor people since Indonesia invaded and forcibly annexed the territory 9½ years ago. With the population decimated by possibly 30 percent of its pre-1975 level, it is more than understandable that the Timorese people themselves are totally opposed. Moreover, it runs against their own values and traditional practices, and is in conflict with their religious beliefs.

It is also worth noting that, while urging the East Timorese to further reduce their numbers, the Indonesian authorities are also engaging in a programme of transmigration for East Timor which hardly backs up the claim that the territory is 'over-populated'.

TAPOL has been concerned for some time about the reported birth control programme, but was not aware until reading the above-mentioned report that the World Bank was directly involved. We need to ascertain the facts before making further comment and are therefore asking you for information. If you do indeed support the programme, perhaps you would explain your justification for doing so. I think you can rest assured that there are many others who will also want to know.

Yours sincerely,

Carmel Budiardjo (Ms)
General Secretary